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ABSTRACT

Many beginning teachers leave the profession after only 2 years. In an effort to help beginning teachers succeed, the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) was created to combat unforseen difficulties. The main difficulties are environmental in nature: (1) difficult work assignments; (2) unclear expectations; (3) inadequate resources; (4) isolation; (5) role conflict; and (6) reality shock. The Beginning Teacher Assistance Program is a formal, systematic effort to provide ongoing assistance to the new teacher during the induction period (usually 3 years). The program relies on the use of mentors and direct needs assessments. Many types of assistance cannot be planned ahead of time, and each program is individualized with the help of the mentor and support group. Initial assistance may include providing helpful information about specific responsibilities, the school, the community, school district policies and procedures, and the curriculum. Celebrating the beginner's arrival, establishing rapport, and providing an orientation are also very helpful. The program also provides for ongoing assistance, ranging from providing moral support to conducting seminars. To assess the overall value of the program and to make necessary changes, an evaluation is suggested. (72 references) (LAP)

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How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed

Stephen P. Gordon

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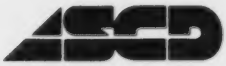
How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed

Stephen P. Gordon



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1
The Problem: Unforeseen Difficulties

I sat by the same person every single day at lunch, and I never really talked to him. He wouldn't even say hello to me. Sometimes I would walk into the faculty lounge, and it was just like there was a wall between me and the older teachers.

—A beginning teacher

In the coming year, thousands of college graduates will enter the nation's classrooms to begin their teaching careers. Most of these teachers will have received high grades in their teaching methods courses and student teaching experiences. Most will have a genuine affection for young people and will be committed to making a difference in the lives of their students. Despite the good intentions and high expectations of these beginners, 40 to 50 percent of them will drop out of teaching within the first seven years (New Mexico State Department of Education 1988, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 1984), most within the first two years (Schlechty and Vance 1983). Of those who survive, many will have such negative initial experiences that they may never reach their full potential as educators (Romatowski, Dorminey, and Voorhees 1989; Huling-Austin 1986).

Six Environmental Difficulties

What is the cause of the alarming attrition rate in the early years of teaching? Some blame the quality of those

who enter teaching, others point to the teacher education programs that prepare them. The literature, however, indicates that many of the difficulties beginners encounter are environmental in nature; they are grounded in the culture of the teaching profession and the conditions of the school as a workplace. Let's look at six environmental difficulties that await our novice teachers.

1. Difficult Work Assignments

Other professions gradually increase the novice's work responsibilities over time. In the teaching profession, beginners often start out with *more* responsibilities than veteran teachers and are expected to perform all of their duties with the same expertise as experienced professionals. Returning teachers usually choose to teach the best courses, leaving the least interesting and most difficult courses to beginners (Kurtz 1983). New teachers are often given the most time-consuming and least rewarding assignments (Kurtz 1983) as well as larger classes, more difficult students, and more duties than experienced teachers (Romatowski, Dorminey, and Voorhees 1989).

2. Unclear Expectations

Schools have myriad formal rules and procedures that are new and unclear to beginning teachers. Beyond formal expectations, there are many informal routines and customs that are even more difficult for new teachers to learn. To make matters still more complicated, different groups expect different things from beginners. Conflicting expectations of administrators, other teachers, students, and parents contribute to what Corcoran has referred to as the "condition of not knowing" (1981, p. 20). A study of first-year teachers (Kurtz 1983) revealed that a common complaint of novice teachers was: "I never knew what was expected of me." This complaint was most common among those who left teaching early.

3. Inadequate Resources

Entry-year teachers often find their classrooms lacking instructional resources and materials. In many cases this is due to the traditional summer raid on classrooms belonging to recently resigned teachers:

> When a teacher resigns, the remaining teachers often descend upon the classroom and remove any materials, equipment, or furniture of value and replace them with their discards. The new teacher enters a classroom equipped with leftovers (Glickman 1984-85, p. 38).

The effects of such raiding on beginning teachers can be frustrating and harmful. When teachers are most in need of quality instructional resources and materials they often have the worst in the school.

4. Isolation

Beginning teachers often suffer from emotional isolation when they are assigned to the most physically isolated classrooms (Kurtz 1983). They may also suffer from social and professional isolation. Experienced teachers are not likely to offer assistance to beginning teachers, even when beginners are clearly experiencing severe difficulties (Houston and Felder 1982, Ryan 1979, Newberry 1978). Why do experienced teachers avoid assisting new teachers? Some believe that beginning teachers need to go through their rites of passage alone, just as the veterans did in their first years (Ryan 1979). Others would like to offer assistance to new teachers but feel their efforts would be viewed as interference. Many experienced teachers feel that the principal alone is responsible for assisting new teachers.

Beginning teachers contribute to their own isolation when they hesitate to ask for help. Many consider seeking help as an admission of failure and incompetence. In fact, beginning teachers studied by Newberry (1978) went to great lengths to cover up serious problems with student discipline.

5. Role Conflict

It is true that growing numbers of adults in their late twenties, thirties, and beyond are now entering or reentering teaching but the majority of beginning teachers continue to be young adults. Conflict often exists between the roles of teacher and young adult. The new teacher may be living away from home or the safety of college for the first time and may have just moved to a new community. He may be opening bank or charge accounts, renting and furnishing an apartment, or buying a car for the first time. He may be beginning a marriage or starting a family. A nonteaching spouse may be unable to relate to the teacher's concerns about what is happening at school or understand why he spends so much more time and energy on schoolwork than on the family. The conflict between the roles of teacher and young adult often leads new teachers to perceive that neither role is being given sufficient time and attention. This perception can lead to strong feelings of guilt (Gehrke 1982) and unhappiness.

6. Reality Shock

According to Veenman, "reality shock" is "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (1984, p. 143). It is caused by the beginning teacher's realizations about the world of teaching and her lack of preparation for many of the demands and difficulties of that world. Many beginners embark on their first teaching assignments with highly idealized perceptions of teaching: they tend to envision themselves spending the entire day fostering their students' academic growth. Early on, they find that teaching actually includes a wide range of nonacademic duties, including disciplining students, collecting money and forms, completing administrative paperwork, and serving as parent-substitutes. Additionally, teachers who have looked forward to being autonomous, creative professionals may find their orientation toward teaching in conflict with prescribed curriculums, instructional programs, textbooks, or materials (Broga 1972). The discrepancy between the beginning teacher's vision of teaching and the real world of teaching can cause serious disillusionment (Armstrong

1984, Broga 1972, Campbell 1972). Corcoran (1981) found that "transition shock" can lead to a state of paralysis, which renders teachers unable to transfer to the classroom skills they learned during teacher education. Reality shock can make the other five environmental difficulties more severe by reducing a beginning teacher's ability to cope.

Twelve Potential Needs

There have been numerous studies about the specific problems and needs of beginning teachers (Boccia 1991, 1989; Odell, Loughlin, and Ferraro 1986-1987; Veenman 1984; Grant and Zeichner 1981; Johnston and Ryan 1980). No two studies have produced precisely the same lists of problems or needs. However, if we compare studies that have yielded prioritized lists of problems or needs, the same items tend to appear at the top of each list (although the specific order varies). Thus, a set of potential high-priority needs of beginning teachers is suggested by the research. Many beginning teachers need help with:

1. Managing the classroom
2. Acquiring information about the school system
3. Obtaining instructional resources and materials
4. Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and other professional responsibilities
5. Assessing students and evaluating student progress
6. Motivating students
7. Using effective teaching methods
8. Dealing with individual students' needs, interests, abilities, and problems
9. Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers
10. Communicating with parents
11. Adjusting to the teaching environment and role
12. Receiving emotional support

Many of these specific needs are rooted in one or more of the environmental difficulties discussed earlier. At the same time, insufficient knowledge, skill, experience, and socialization can contribute to these needs. Therefore, *both*

the environmental difficulties and specific needs of beginners must be addressed.

These needs should not be adopted automatically as the needs list for your district's assistance program. Your teachers may have vital needs that differ from those of the general population of beginning teachers. In reality, each new teacher probably has some needs similar to most beginning teachers everywhere, some needs unique to the group of beginners in the same specific work setting, and some needs unique to that teacher alone. Your beginning teacher assistance program development committee should conduct a local needs assessment before defining and prioritizing beginners' needs. Also, the induction team (see Chapter 2) for each beginner should be given the flexibility to identify and meet individual needs.

Effects of Unmet Needs

If the environmental difficulties and specific needs of beginning teachers are not addressed, negative emotional, physical, attitudinal, and behavioral problems may result. The beginner may suffer from insomnia or nightmares (Applegate et al. 1977), leading to fatigue and physical exhaustion or a sense of failure and depression (Ryan et al. 1980). Outbursts of crying, loss of temper, and occasional vomiting are not uncommon (Ryan 1974).

Novice teachers' early experiences are likely to lower their self-esteem, make them less optimistic, and cause them to develop more negative attitudes toward children (Earp and Tanner 1975). They tend to view themselves as less happy, less relaxed, less confident, less perceptive, more controlled, and more blaming than they were before they started teaching (Wright and Tuska 1968). They often feel they possess less knowledge about teaching at the end than at the beginning of their first year (Gaede 1978) and see themselves as becoming more authoritarian, dominating, and custodial in their treatment of students (Day 1959; Hoy 1969, 1968; McArthur 1978). Beginners report that they become more impulsive, less inspiring, louder, less responsive, more reserved, and make school

more boring as a result of their early teaching experiences (Wright and Tuska 1968).

The ultimate effect of the negative experiences of many beginning teachers is an exit from the profession. The attrition rate for each of the first two years of teaching has been reported to be approximately 15 percent, compared to a normal turnover rate of 6 percent (Schlechty and Vance 1983). Moreover, indications show that it is the most promising teachers who leave teaching in the early years (Harris and Collay 1990, Schlechty and Vance 1983) and many teachers who survive the induction period and remain in teaching develop a survival mentality, a set of restricted teaching methods, and a resistance to curricular and instructional change that may last throughout their teaching careers (Romatowski, Dorminey, and Voorhees 1989; Huling-Austin 1986).

* * *

Many of the problems associated with beginning teachers in the literature may not be present in your school system. However, those charged with developing programs to assist beginning teachers have a responsibility to take a hard look at the beginning teacher literature and compare it to the environment and experiences of beginning teachers in their schools.

2
The Solution: A Beginning Teacher Assistance Program

She's very understanding and compassionate. I know that whenever I have a problem, I can call her at home or I can see her after school and she'll always take the time to talk to me. She always gives me that positive reinforcement, that pat on the back.

—A beginning teacher discussing her mentor

A discussion of what a beginning teacher assistance program (BTAP) is usually leads to a discussion of the definition of "beginning teacher." Is the experienced substitute teacher who has just been hired to her first regular teaching assignment a beginner? What about the person who is returning after several years? How about the experienced teacher who is new to the district, building, content area, or grade level? Most likely, all of these teachers need some special assistance, but the support they require is different than the support needed by the true novice. Questions like "What should be the goals of the assistance program?" "Who will be served by the program?" "How long will individuals be part of the program?" and "What types of support are most appropriate for different types of 'beginners'?" are best dealt with at the local level. When answering these questions, the local development team must consider such variables as the goals of the school district's staff development program, the district's resources, and the types and numbers of beginning teachers in the district.

What a BTAP Is and Is Not

A BTAP can be defined as a formal, systematic effort to provide ongoing assistance to a new teacher during the induction period. Many would argue that it takes up to three years to fully induct a beginning teacher, and that some type of formal assistance should be provided to the beginner throughout that time.

Huling-Austin (1988) identified five commonly accepted goals of teacher induction programs:

1. To improve teaching performance
2. To increase the retention of promising beginning teachers
3. To promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers
4. To transmit the culture of the system to beginning teachers
5. To satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification

These five goals are laudable. However, should the last goal be the *only* one adopted by a school district, then there is a good chance that a perfunctory program will result, aimed at satisfying the letter rather than the spirit of the mandate. The first four purposes are interrelated and interdependent. They could and should *all* be integrated into a BTAP that would also satisfy a state mandate for an induction program.

It's important to understand also what a true BTAP is not.

- *It is not a beginners' orientation alone.* Some individuals still consider an orientation the primary component of a BTAP. While an orientation to the school and community is vital, it should be viewed as the entry point, not end point, of teacher induction. It is the long-range, ongoing assistance that is the most important aspect of an effective program.
- *It is not merely the assignment of a buddy.* In many schools I have visited, beginning teachers are assigned a buddy who may show the new teacher where to procure supplies and materials and how to fill out various administrative forms, and who is generally available should

the beginner seek advice. Usually these buddies have no preparation in the skills needed to assist a beginner. After the first few weeks, interaction between buddy and newcomer tends to be infrequent. The buddy may never even visit the beginner's classroom to observe a lesson. While such buddy systems are better than no support at all, they should not be confused with a comprehensive BTAP involving an induction team or even with the ongoing assistance provided by a well-prepared mentor. In a study by Klug (1988), participants preferred a highly structured program with an induction team including a mentor, administrator, and representative from higher education over a loosely structured buddy system.

- *It is not an evaluation program.* The purpose of a BTAP is purely supportive in nature. It should never be used to "weed out" incompetent teachers. New teachers must be evaluated, and incompetent teachers without potential for improvement should not be allowed to remain in the profession, but the trust-building, nurturing, and support that are at the core of BTAPs do not mix with the gatekeeping function.
- *It is not a cure-all.* Huling-Austin (1986) reminds us that a BTAP cannot be expected to overcome major problems within the school such as misplaced teachers, overloaded teaching schedules, and overcrowded classes. Nor can the assistance program be expected to turn teachers without potential into competent professionals. It is important that those involved with BTAPs understand the limitations as well as the potential of such programs.

The Induction Team

The most important ingredients in any beginning teacher assistance program are the people who give their time and energy as part of the induction effort. An *induction team* is more likely to provide the best chance for a beginner's success than any single support person operating alone. A number of agencies and individuals can be significant players on the induction team. For example:

School Board Members and the Superintendent. These individuals are central to the school district's commitment

to the BTAP. They provide the political base and moral support for the program. The superintendent can assist the BTAP development team in finding necessary human and material resources. The school board and superintendent are also in the best positions to publicly acknowledge those who devote time and energy to assisting beginning teachers.

The Local Education Association. The support of the local education association is important. Because both the school district and the association benefit from a successful BTAP, gaining the support of the association is usually not a problem *if the association is involved from the very beginning and if the school district is willing to provide appropriate resources for the BTAP.*

The education association can appoint a representative to the BTAP development team and assist in providing preparation and support for mentors. It can also help plan and deliver information and support activities for beginning teachers. Finally, association representatives should be part of the monitoring, evaluation, and revision of the BTAP.

The Principal. The principal's leadership is essential to the BTAP. A common practice is for principals to have the right of approval over mentor appointments and assignments. By attending mentor preparation sessions, principals provide support for the mentors and refine their own knowledge and skills. By attending orientations, workshops, and seminars for beginning teachers, building administrators communicate to participants the high priority they assign to beginning teachers and the assistance program. Building principals should not let the fact that mentors have been assigned to beginning teachers deter them from observing and conferring with individual beginners on a regular basis.

The Mentor. In many assistance programs the beginner is assigned a mentor who has primary responsibility for providing direct assistance to the new teacher. Sheehy (1976, p. 31) defines a mentor as a "nonparental career model who actively provides assistance, support, and opportunities for the protege." Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, and Newman (1984, p. 329) define mentoring as "a relationship in which a person of greater rank or expertise teaches, guides, and develops a novice in an organization or profession." Schmidt and Wolfe (1980) list

three broad functions of mentors: role model, consultant-advisor, and sponsor. Schein (1978) has proposed eight possible mentor functions: confidant, teacher, sponsor, role model, developer of talent, opener of doors, protector, and successful leader.

In BTAPs, the mentor is usually an experienced practicing teacher, but others can serve as effective mentors. For example, retired teachers serve as mentors in some assistance programs. The role of the mentor is to support and challenge, but not to evaluate the beginner. This means that the mentor should not be in a linear relationship with the beginner on the school district's organizational chart.

Central Office Supervisors. A central office supervisor is a likely candidate for coordinator of the district's beginning teacher assistance program. Curriculum development and subject matter coordinators can provide information on the scope and sequence of the curriculum and available curricular resources. Coordinators of special education programs can help beginners to better serve children with special needs. Finally, instructional supervisors can coach mentors in interpersonal, observation, conferencing, and problem-solving skills.

Other Teachers. The department chairperson or instructional team leader can work with mentors to provide assistance to beginning teachers. These instructional leaders may have areas of expertise different from and complementary to the mentor's. Teacher-leaders can encourage other teachers in the department or on the instructional team to form a support network for the new teacher.

Regular teachers can go a long way toward reducing the beginning teacher's isolation by making a point of regularly interacting with the newcomer. Effective, experienced teachers can allow beginners to visit their classrooms and observe them teaching. All of the teachers in proximity to the beginner can make a commitment to the caring, supportive environment that will give the beginner the optimal chance for success. The idea here is that one teacher is the assigned mentor, but all teachers are support teachers.

Teacher Educators. Teacher educators from colleges and universities may be called on for assistance during the planning, implementation, or evaluation phase of the beginning teacher assistance program. The most effective assistance is probably provided by university or college consultants who work with the school district through all of these phases. Specific functions of teacher educators are consulting the assistance program development team, training and consulting mentors, facilitating group seminars for mentors or beginning teachers, and conducting research on teacher induction. The teacher preparation institutions also benefit from their involvement in the BTAP. Involvement can keep professors current with school practice and teacher educators can acquire feedback on how well their programs are preparing students for teaching.

State Agencies. State agencies can provide guidelines, resources, and consultation to school districts developing BTAPs. They can offer preparation programs for program coordinators and mentor trainers and they can disseminate information about model programs. Intermediate units can facilitate consortiums of school systems wishing to combine resources in order to offer services to mentors or beginning teachers that individual school systems would be unable to provide.

Team Members' Levels of Involvement

We've taken a look at several potential members of a BTAP development team. All of these persons and agencies have potential to assist as well as benefit from a BTAP. It is the local school district that should decide which stakeholders will be part of the assistance program, as well as the extent to which each participant will be involved.

Clear communication between the principal, mentor, and other support persons is essential. The principal and mentor need to meet with other instructional leaders and teachers who will be working with the newcomers before the school year begins to set up procedures for coordinating support efforts. Continued coordination

throughout the school year is vital to the success of the program.

Effects of BTAPs in General

An effective BTAP can eliminate many of the problems encountered by beginning teachers. In a cooperative venture between Indiana State University and ten school districts located in West Central Indiana, twenty first-year teachers were assigned an experienced support teacher, received monthly visits from a university supervisor, attended monthly peer-support seminars, and were sent a newsletter. The interns involved in the program displayed significantly better performance than a control group in forty teaching skills. The beginners "completed the year with significantly healthier attitudes and perceptions about teaching than did a similar group of beginning teachers who did not have the . . . support program" (Henry 1988, p. 15). All of the new teachers enrolled in the program chose to stay in teaching.

Parker (1988) studied the Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program, a regional teacher induction program for rural schools. Beginning teacher assistance included peer support from other new teachers, seminars, and an induction team including mentors, school administrators, and university personnel. All sixty-nine teachers who completed questionnaires over a three-year period said they benefitted from their involvement in the program, from new ideas and techniques, and the help they received with problem solving. In this program, the induction team worked with first-year teachers to identify areas of concern and needed growth and to set goals. The teachers reported problems similar to those in a control group, but were better able to motivate students, to respond successfully to student misbehavior, to develop positive relationships with their students, and to view their first year of teaching in positive terms. Administrators said they had fewer student referrals, parent calls, and student complaints involving teachers in the induction program (Varah, Theune, and Parker 1986). A series of follow-up studies on the Wisconsin-Whitewater program shows that

teachers in the program have a higher retention rate and more positive attitudes toward teaching than members of a control group (Manley, Siudzinski, and Varah 1989).

Beginning teachers who took part in a teacher induction program in the Richardson, Texas, Independent School District reported that the program enhanced their professional competence and motivation (Brooks 1986). Such positive BTAP outcomes appear to have lasting effects. Experienced teachers surveyed in follow-up studies by Odell (1990) and Rossetto and Grosenick (1987) continued to report positive influences of their participation in a BTAP.

Induction team members report that BTAPs are beneficial to them as well as the beginners they work with. Administrators in three induction programs (Hawk 1987) reported that being a team member helped them grow professionally and better understand the qualities of good teaching, made them more aware of teachers' needs, and improved principal-teacher relations. Principals in a program studied by Odell (1990, p. 15) reported that "the presence of the program positively influenced the atmosphere in their schools by emphasizing teacher interaction and collaboration."

Effects of Mentoring on Beginning Teachers

After conducting research on induction programs in eight states, Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987) concluded that:

> The assignment of a support teacher may well be the most powerful and cost-effective induction practice available to program developers. First-year teachers who were assigned designated support teachers consistently reported that those persons were who they relied upon most heavily for assistance (pp. 35–36).

Other studies agree with the conclusions drawn by Huling-Austin and Murphy. Huffman and Leak (1986) found that 95 percent of teachers in one beginning teacher program considered mentoring an important element of teacher induction. Teachers in the Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program considered the mentor to be the

key person in the success of that program (Smith-Davis and Cohen 1989). Another group of researchers who studied state-mandated beginning teacher programs concluded that:

> For many of our beginning teachers the most significant positive force on their experience was the peer or support teacher. The peer or support teacher was typically rated as highly influential early in the year and increasingly influential as the year progressed. . . . They were valued primarily as sources of practical information and secondarily as sources of psychological support (Hoffman, Edwards, O'Neal, Barnes, and Paulissen 1986, p. 19).

In a mentoring program in Minnesota, a large majority of beginning teachers reported that they had examined and improved their teaching behaviors and had received social and emotional support, and that their mentors were effective role models who demonstrated the qualities of excellent leadership (Warring 1989). Additionally, 85 percent of the administrators in the schools where the mentoring took place said that the program was helpful to beginning teachers, and 78 percent of the administrators reported that the mentoring program benefitted students.

Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987, p. 36) found that beginning teachers believed they "received the most help from support teachers in the areas of locating materials, student discipline, lesson planning, grading, establishing realistic expectations of student work and behaviors, and having someone to talk to/listen." Fagon and Walter (1982) reported that the majority of beginning teachers in their study gave their mentor credit for helping them gain self-confidence, encouraging their creativity, and familiarizing them with the school administration.

3
Developing an Assistance Program

There's no handbook. Nothing's written down. You don't have a clue what's going on. Just simple things. How to write a hall pass . . . absentee lists . . . the dress code for teachers. How are you supposed to know that without a handbook?

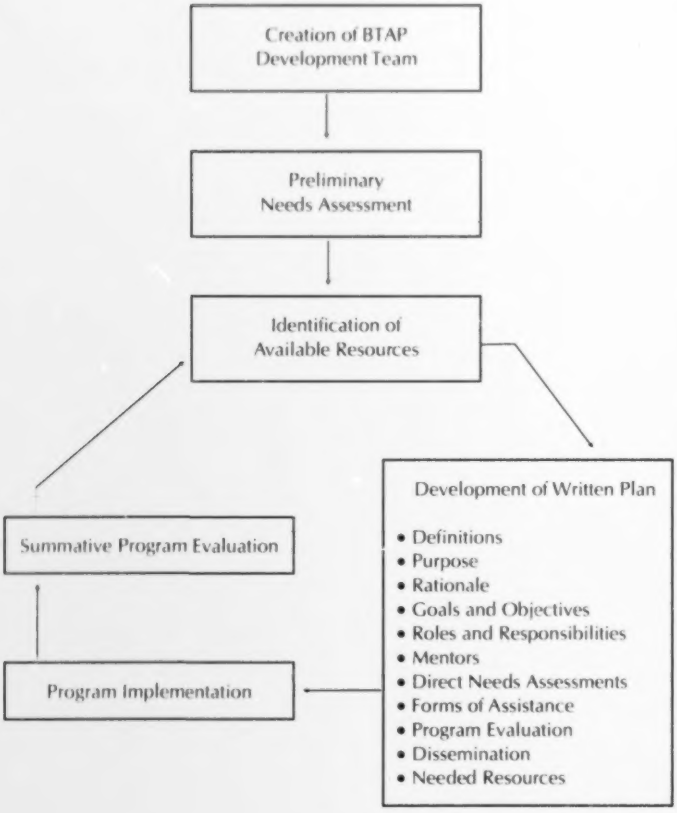
—A beginning teacher

Before discussing the BTAP model, we need to place BTAP development in perspective. First, the BTAP should be designed as part of the school system's staff development program. It should be consistent with the goals of the larger program, and related to other staff development efforts whenever possible. Both the BTAP and other components of the total staff development program, in turn, should be consistent with the philosophy and goals of the school district.

Second, a cautionary note about program development is in order. Those who have been involved in educational program development know that the actual process usually strays from the clear, sequential path represented by the boxes and arrows on a flow chart. Developing a BTAP can be a messy business. Sometimes the components of program development overlap or must be rearranged. Problems are a given, and problem solving is a natural part of the program development process. Yet many problems cannot be predicted and thus are not accounted for in program development models. Despite the problems inherent with program models, they can be useful as broad

guidelines for program development. They suggest concepts and processes to be considered and adapted by practitioners. With the above caveat mind, I propose the process illustrated in Figure 3.1 as a working model for developing a BTAP.

Figure 3.1
BTAP Development Model



Organize the BTAP Development Team

It makes sense for school districts with staff development planning councils to place BTAP development under the auspices of those councils. School districts without such councils must start from scratch by appointing a BTAP development team. The BTAP development team can include, along with staff development council members where appropriate, any educators who are knowledgeable and concerned about the problems of beginning teachers. The central office, building administrators, the local teachers' association, and teachers at-large should be represented on the team. Representatives from nearby teacher preparation institutions or state intermediate units who have expertise in assisting beginning teachers can also be asked to serve as consultants to the team.

Conduct a Preliminary Needs Assessment

The program development team will probably want to begin its work early in the school year prior to the year that the BTAP is to be put into place. The need for advanced planning provides the team with a curious dilemma. They are charged with planning an assistance program for beginning teachers who have not been identified. At this point it is impossible to know the specific needs of those teachers. Moreover, the mentors who will assist beginners have not yet been selected. Thus, the BTAP development team will not know the specific preparation and support needs of future mentors.

Numerous sources of information can help the team predict some general needs of beginning teachers and mentors. The team can begin with a review of the literature on teacher induction and interview current first- and second-year teachers to determine problems they experienced. Principals and supervisors can describe problems encountered by beginners they have worked with. The team can visit school districts with similar populations of teachers and students that have already implemented BTAPs to find out needs the beginning teachers and mentors in those programs reported. And representatives

from higher education and state agencies who have worked with beginning teachers in comparable school systems can also report about the typical needs of beginners and mentors. A preliminary needs assessment relying on these sources can serve as a basis for a broad, tentative plan for a BTAP. The plan can then be revised and made more specific once mentors and entry-year teachers are available for direct needs assessments.

Identify Available Resources

Before the BTAP development team begins designing the program, they should think about available human and material resources. Potential human resources include educators within the school district who have special expertise and responsibilities associated with beginners' typical needs as well as representatives from teacher education institutions, state and community agencies, the local parent-teacher association, the chamber of commerce, and government service agencies. Potential material resources include available funding, curricular and staff development materials, and facilities and equipment that can be used for the BTAP.

Development of a Written Plan

The next step in BTAP development is to plan the program itself, and to put the plan in writing. According to Figure 3.1, the written plan consists of several components.

Definitions

The program development team needs to define for their own use a number of key terms typically associated with BTAPs. These definitions should be consistent with the purpose, goals, roles, and responsibilities of the local program, not simply pulled from the literature or other school districts' BTAPs. A list of definitions might include terms such as *beginning teacher*, *induction team*, *mentor*, and *mentoring* as well as terms unique to the school system's BTAP. The team must make sure that references to those

terms are consistent with the definitions throughout the written plan.

Purpose

The statement of purpose declares the BTAP's intent. It can be as brief as a single sentence, but it represents the vision on which the entire BTAP is based. Some sample statements of purpose include:

- *The purpose of the _____ School District's Beginning Teacher Assistance Program is to facilitate the growth of the beginning teacher toward the highest levels of professional and personal development possible during the initial years of teaching.*
- *The purpose of the _____ School District's Teacher Induction Program is to help the beginning teacher acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to experience a successful induction period.*
- *The purpose of the _____ School District's Beginning Teacher Support Program is to identify needs of the beginning teacher and to meet these needs through the collaborative effort of an induction team consisting of the beginning teacher, a mentor teacher, a university consultant, and the school principal.*
- *The purpose of the _____ School District's Teacher Induction Program is to facilitate the socialization of beginning teachers and to increase the retention of promising beginners.*

Rationale

The program rationale is a statement that explains the need for the BTAP. Two examples of rationales are:

- *The primary goal of _____ School District is to develop students to their fullest academic, social, and personal potential. One way to try to achieve this goal is to help teachers develop to their fullest potential as educators. A long line of research tells us that beginning teachers experience problems during the induction period, which, if unaddressed, can lead to negative attitudes, poor instructional performance, and*

departure from the teaching profession. One group of studies tells us that beginning teacher assistance programs can solve or reduce the problems faced by new teachers, improve the quality of their instruction and their students' learning, and help us retain promising teachers. The beginning teacher assistance program described in this document is a research-based program designed to facilitate the optimal development of beginning teachers and the students they teach.

- *Preservice teacher preparation programs are designed to provide teachers with the general knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for effective teaching. Even the best preservice programs cannot totally prepare beginning teachers for many of the specific problems they must deal with during their transition to inservice teaching. Many new teachers, for instance, need assistance with adjusting to their new professional environment, organizing and managing their classrooms, understanding the curriculum, and obtaining instructional resources. The _____ School District's Teacher Induction Program calls for an induction team to work with the beginning teacher to identify problems the new teacher is experiencing and to help the beginner solve those problems. We believe that the assistance of an induction team including a mentor teacher, the school principal, and a representative from higher education gives the beginning teacher the best chance of making a successful transition from preservice to inservice teaching.*

Goals and Objectives

The results of the preliminary needs assessment allow the BTAP development team to state broad goals and general objectives for the initial year of the BTAP. A few examples are given below.

- ***Goal 1**. Mentors will develop the skills necessary to provide professional and personal assistance to beginning teachers.*

Related Objectives. *Mentors will develop:*

1.1 needs-assessment skills
1.2 communication skills
1.3 problem-solving skills
1.4 coaching skills
1.5 conflict-management skills
1.6 skills necessary to facilitate adult learning
1.7 skills necessary to facilitate reflective practice

Goal 2. *Beginning teachers will acquire the knowledge necessary to become oriented to the school and community.*

Related Objectives. *Beginning teachers will acquire knowledge of:*

2.1 community history
2.2 community demographics
2.3 community resources
2.4 students served by the school district
2.5 school policies, procedures, and routines
2.6 the school curriculum
2.7 school curricular and instructional resources
2.8 the school building where the beginner will be teaching
2.9 the professional colleagues the beginner will be working with

Goal 3. *The beginning teacher will develop or enhance effective teaching skills.*

Related Objectives. *The beginning teacher will develop or enhance skills necessary for:*

3.1 managing the classroom
3.2 planning, organizing, and managing work
3.3 designing effective lessons
3.4 motivating students
3.5 diagnosing and meeting the needs of individual students
3.6 using effective teaching methods
3.7 evaluating student work

The goals and objectives in the initial written plan should be viewed as tentative. In fact, the program development team may decide to delay setting some objectives until after the specific needs of the first group of beginners and their mentors are assessed. Once direct needs assessments are made, some revisions in program goals and objectives and corresponding revisions in the remainder of the BTAP will almost certainly be necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

A comprehensive BTAP involves a number of support groups and individuals as well as beginning teachers. The responsibilities of each member of the induction team need to be agreed to ahead of time and coordinated on a continuous basis. The BTAP development team can use a chart like the one in Figure 3.2 to relate BTAP goals, roles, and responsibilities. Goals are written in the first column. The name of the group or individual who will coordinate assistance efforts for each goal is listed in the second column. Other groups and persons who will assist in efforts to meet each goal are written in the third column. The specific responsibilities of each party are listed in column four. The program development team should remember to include on the chart the beginning teacher's responsibilities relative to each goal.

Figure 3.2
Sample Chart Showing
Relation of BTAP Goals, Roles, and Responsibilities

BTAP Goal	Coordinator	Contributing Groups or Individuals	Specific Responsibilities
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

Mentors

The development team must decide on criteria and procedures for mentor selection and must plan a program for preparing mentors for their new roles. Guidelines must be established for assigning mentors to beginning teachers and provisions must be made for ongoing support and rewards for mentors. These topics are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

Direct Needs Assessments

The tentative written plan for the BTAP is based on the preliminary needs assessment. Once entry-year teachers have joined the faculty their needs can be directly assessed. Once mentors have begun to carry out their support roles, they too will develop needs that must be assessed and addressed. More information about specific ways to assess beginning teachers' and mentors' needs is presented in Chapter 5.

Forms of Assistance for Beginning Teachers

The heart and soul of the BTAP is the support provided to beginning teachers. Many types of assistance cannot be planned ahead of time. But many can and—due to practical considerations—must be determined in advance. Chapters 6 and 7 present a variety of options for assisting beginning teachers.

Program Evaluation

There are two types of program evaluation: formative and summative. Formative evaluation takes place while the program is being implemented. It provides information for continuous program improvement. Major program revisions are not usually made as a result of formative evaluation. Summative evaluation is comprehensive and is done at a particular time, probably at the end of the first year of the program and again every three to five years. The summative evaluation determines the overall value of the program and whether or not major revisions in the program are necessary. Both formative and the first summative evaluation should be designed during the BTAP planning

process. If this is done, data for both types of evaluation can be gathered from the beginning of program implementation. Additional information on program evaluation is presented in Chapter 8.

Dissemination

Four types of dissemination need to be provided for in the written BTAP plan. First, information about the need for a BTAP must be provided to the community and educators within the school system. Second, the plan itself should be made available in various forms and explained to interested parties. Third, provisions should be made to report on program activities that take place after the program has begun. Finally, there should be a plan for disseminating program outcomes to the school system and community. By providing appropriate information to the school and larger community, the BTAP development team increases the likelihood of receiving support for the program and helps ensure program success.

Needed Resources

A BTAP need not be an overly expensive staff development program, but it should not be an add-on program. Human and material resources already available must be developed, and new resources must be identified and procured. Resources needed for each component of the program should be identified in the written plan and budgeted for. Hard rather than soft money will be necessary to make the program a long-term success.

Begin Program Implementation

The fifth component of the BTAP development model is program implementation. Successful implementation does not consist of merely carrying out the written plan in linear fashion. It involves a continuous cycle of implementation, evaluation, needs assessment, and program revision. This means that the BTAP development team should stay in place after the plan has been approved in order to sustain program development. Also, the initial program must have

sufficient flexibility to allow for necessary change without program disruption or participant confusion.

Conduct a Summative Program Evaluation

The last component of the BTAP development model is the summative evaluation. A formal evaluation can indicate the need for minor revisions in the program or can lead into a new program development cycle resulting in major program revisions (see Figure 3.1). Chapter 8 discusses the summative evaluation component in detail.

4
Mentors

Being a mentor keeps me current. When I have to answer my mentee's questions, it makes me ask, "Why am I doing what I'm doing?" In discussing philosophy, problems, or techniques with this new teacher, I find out what I really believe. That makes me a stronger person and a better teacher.

—A beginning teacher mentor

Mentoring is the cornerstone of many successful beginning teacher assistance programs. While it is possible to develop a successful program without mentors, mentoring's track record is so positive that I advise any team developing a BTAP to include a mentoring component.

Recruiting Mentors

Prospective mentors should be made aware of the need for and purpose of the school district's BTAP, and the role they could play in it. It is especially critical that service as a mentor be voluntary. Potential mentors should be made fully aware of the responsibilities they will assume if they become mentors. They should also be told of the rewards of mentoring and the support mentors will receive from the school system.

Numerous studies have documented the positive effects of mentoring on the mentors themselves. Warring (1989) reported that mentors in one program refined their own teaching styles and strategies as a result of their involvement in the program. These mentors reported receiving social and emotional support from colleagues

including building administrators and other mentors. All the mentors believed that mentor/mentee activities were productive.

Odell (1990) found that mentors perceived that their experience as support persons increased their confidence, broadened their perspectives concerning the school district, helped them gain knowledge about teaching and learning, and improved their communication skills. Additionally, Godley and others (1986-1987) found that mentors believed mentoring enhanced the experience of being a professional and improved their collegial and process skills. These mentors felt that they had been recognized for their professional expertise and that they had made an important contribution to their entry-year committees.

And in a preliminary analysis of an induction program for experienced teachers, mentors reported that they experienced professional growth both through reflecting on their own teaching and through mentoring inexperienced teachers. These mentors also reported appreciation for the public recognition they received as mentors, their enhanced roles as teacher educators, and the increased collegiality with other educators (Killian 1990).

The best way to introduce the BTAP and the mentoring concept is at a school or district faculty assembly. A more detailed awareness session can then be provided for those interested in learning more. One possibility is to invite mentors and beginning teachers from school districts with successful mentoring programs to discuss their BTAPs in general and mentoring in particular. Becoming a mentor should be represented as a prestigious role awarded to those who possess outstanding credentials.

Mentor Selection

There are a variety of ways to select mentors, including nominations by principals or other teachers or self-nominations. Those nominated by others should have the opportunity to accept or decline the nomination very early in the process. A committee should be set up to screen nominations and applications. I prefer self-

nominations and a selection committee made up of part or all of the BTAP development team. In this system, mentor selections are made in consultation with the school principal.

Prerequisite criteria and selection criteria are necessary when choosing mentors. Prerequisite criteria indicate whether an individual is eligible for consideration by the selection committee. Examples of prerequisite criteria are years of teaching experience, years with the school system, level of education, and type of certification. Selection criteria are used to choose mentors from the pool of eligible candidates. It seems logical to make those criteria consistent with the literature on mentoring. Let's take a brief look at what scholars say about the characteristics of effective mentors.

Schmidt and Wolfe (1980) concluded that the most important characteristic of a successful mentor is a commitment to provide personal time and attention to the beginner. They also found that mentors should be of high professional achievement and have diversified interests and activities. Little, Galagaran, and O'Neal (1984) reported that effective mentors have personal and professional respect for those they are assisting; they are more interested in facilitating beginners than controlling them. Clawson (1980) found that those chosen as mentors were consistent, informal, willing to share information, and demanding. Positive traits of mentors revealed in a study by Gehrke and Kay (1984) were genuine interest in the advisee, helpfulness, caring, willingness to take time, dedication, professionalism, friendliness, outgoing natures, patience, and influence within the system. A study by Bova and Phillips (1984) suggests that effective mentors tend to evaluate situations from many points of view and examine multiple options for dealing with problems. Odell (1990) proposed that characteristics of effective mentors are teaching excellence; ability to work with adults; respect for others' viewpoints; willingness to engage in active, open learning; and social and public relations skills. DeBolt (1989, p. 19) used The Delphi Technique to have mentors themselves rate characteristics helpful to the mentoring process. The characteristics rated most helpful were:

- approachability
- integrity
- ability to listen
- sincerity
- willingness to spend time
- enthusiasm
- teaching competence
- trustworthiness
- receptivity
- willingness to work hard
- positive outlook
- confidence
- commitment to the profession
- openness
- experience in teaching
- tactfulness
- cooperativeness
- flexibility

Ways of determining whether potential mentors possess positive characteristics include reviews of letters of nomination or completed application forms; interviews with prospective mentors and their supervisors; examination of curriculum vitae or portfolios; and reviews of written essays in which prospective mentors are asked to state their beliefs about beginning teachers, induction, and mentoring.

It is not recommended that a mentor be chosen only when it is known for sure that a new teacher is going to be hired to fill a specific position. Rather, a pool of mentors should be selected and prepared, with the understanding that they will each be assigned a beginning teacher when an appropriate match can be made. If a mentoring assignment is not available immediately, the mentor-to-be might be given other support responsibilities, such as assignment as a cooperating teacher, staff developer, or advising teacher.

Mentor Preparation

The single greatest problem I have observed in mentoring programs that aren't functioning well is a lack of mentor preparation. A basic preparation program should be carried out well in advance of the arrival of the new teachers to be served by the BTAP. There are several suggested topics for initial mentor preparation.

Knowledge About Teacher Induction

Mentors should be acquainted with the knowledge base on teacher induction. This includes becoming aware of

typical problems experienced by beginning teachers; and the purposes, content, and effects of BTAPs. The school system's BTAP and mentoring component should be discussed in detail. Characteristics of effective mentors and typical mentoring functions can be reviewed so that provisions can be made to identify and address any concerns participants have about the BTAP or their responsibilities as mentors.

Developing Trust and Rapport

Trust and rapport are the foundation of a fruitful relationship between mentor and beginning teacher. Mentors can learn how to establish a positive relationship by using open and supportive communication skills to respond to concerns beginning teachers may have about the mentor-mentee relationship.

Classroom Management and Effective Teaching

BTAP coordinators are often surprised when I suggest that mentor preparation include sessions on classroom management and effective teaching. After all, one can assume that individuals would not have been chosen to be mentors unless they were already effective teachers and classroom managers. Yet mentors themselves are usually grateful that these topics are addressed during the preparation program.

Mentors know that they will be called on to model effective techniques for beginners. Many mentors have reached the stage of their craft at which they are "unconsciously" using effective management and teaching strategies. They often express the need to "brush up" on particular techniques. Analyzing these strategies during mentor preparation can help them to better articulate to beginning teachers why, how, and when they use particular techniques in the classroom.

The classroom management phase of mentor preparation should address ways to prevent classroom management problems and ways to respond to problems that may surface despite the use of preventive techniques. The effective teaching phase can include topics such as diagnosing student needs, lesson design, motivating

students to learn, student learning styles, alternative instructional strategies, and assessing student learning.

Adult Learning

The same methods a teacher has successfully used to teach children may not work when that teacher is trying to promote the growth of beginning teachers. The preparation program should address what motivates adults to learn and how to organize adult learning activities. Mentors can learn how to use the beginner's classroom experience as a resource for learning and how to make learning a matter of mutual inquiry by mentor and beginner. Finally, mentors can learn about adult learning styles and how to adapt mentoring to beginners' preferred modes of learning.

Adult and Teacher Development

Research has shown that cognitive, ego, and social development do not stop when a person reaches adulthood. Like children, adults pass through common stages of growth at different rates. Teachers progress through stages of professional development in addition to the cognitive, ego, and social developmental stages that all adults move through. An example of teacher professional development is *stages of concern* (Fuller 1969). Teachers at the earliest stage of concern, the *self-adequacy stage*, are concerned about doing well when a supervisor is present, getting favorable evaluations, and being accepted and respected by other teachers. They are also concerned with whether their students like them and how their students evaluate them as teachers (Adams and Martray 1981). The next stage of concern is the *teaching tasks stage*. At this stage, teachers become more concerned with issues related to instruction and student discipline (Adams and Martray 1981). Teachers at this stage are concerned primarily with *their* teaching environment and *their* teaching responsibilities. The highest stage of concern is the *teaching impact stage*. At this stage, teachers are more concerned with student learning and students' general well-being. Academic concerns at this stage include diagnosing and meeting individual needs, sparking unmotivated students, and facilitating students'

intellectual and emotional development (Adams and Martray 1981).

Beginning teachers function at different adult and professional developmental levels, need different types of assistance, and respond positively to different styles of mentoring. Mentor preparation should include study of adult and teacher developmental variables, stages of growth relative to each variable, and characteristics of beginning teachers operating at each developmental stage. Mentors can learn how to diagnose the stage at which a beginner is functioning and adapt support behaviors appropriately.

Observation Skills

If problems develop that are going to cause the beginning teacher to leave the profession, the odds are that those problems are going to originate in the beginner's classroom. The classroom is "where the action is," and the mentor needs to regularly visit and collect information about what is happening there. Here we are not talking about checklists or rating scales used for summative evaluation, but rather the gathering of objective, nonjudgmental data that can identify the beginning teacher's needs and serve as a basis for instructional improvement.

One problem mentors and beginners frequently have is translating concerns the beginner may have about a lesson into observable, measurable behaviors. Mentor preparation for classroom observation should include practice linking general instructional concerns with specific teacher and student behaviors that can be observed by the mentor. An extension of this training is practice in choosing or designing observation systems that allow the mentor to systematically collect data on the selected behaviors. It is recommended that mentors develop skills for using a few, simple, common, observation systems. When there is no existing observation system that can be used to gather data relevant to beginning teacher concerns mentors also need practice constructing "tailor-made" observation systems.

Interpersonal Skills

Glickman's (1990) developmental supervision model lists three general interpersonal approaches used by instructional leaders. In a *nondirective* approach, the leader relies primarily on listening, clarifying, and reflecting behaviors. In a *collaborative* approach, the leader does more presenting, problem solving, and negotiating. The leader using a *directive* approach emphasizes directing and standardizing behaviors. Additionally, Glickman distinguishes directive *informational* from directive *controlling* behaviors. The leader using the directive informational approach provides the teacher with considerable information and restricted choice. The leader displaying the directive controlling approach determines the specific actions the teacher is to follow.

Glickman's model holds that there is no one best interpersonal approach to use when supervising teachers. Rather, the developmental model calls for the instructional leader to develop a repertoire of interpersonal approaches and to match approaches to teachers' developmental characteristics. In this model, the leader uses a nondirective approach with teachers functioning at higher developmental levels, a collaborative approach with teachers performing at moderate levels of development, and a directive approach with teachers operating at lower developmental levels.

The long-range dimension of the developmental model calls for the instructional leader to foster the teacher's decision making. This is done by gradually shifting from a directive to a collaborative approach or from a collaborative to a nondirective approach during problem-solving sessions with the teacher.

Three of Glickman's interpersonal approaches seem applicable to mentoring beginning teachers: the nondirective, collaborative, and directive informational approaches (the directive control approach does not seem appropriate for use by mentors in staff relationships with beginning teachers). Preparation for mentors wishing to apply the developmental model can include the following phases:

1. Skill development in each of the three interpersonal approaches (nondirective, collaborative, and directive informational).
2. Instruction in matching particular approaches to beginners' developmental levels and educational situations.
3. Development of skills necessary to facilitate beginning teacher growth toward more complex decision making and self-direction.

Problem-Solving Skills

One of the mentor's primary functions is to help beginning teachers solve problems they are bound to experience during the induction phase. Problem solving has been represented as a process involving several steps (Johnson and Johnson 1982; Schmuck and Runkel 1985). A six-step version of the problem-solving model includes:

1. Gathering information about the perceived problem.
2. Defining the problem in specific terms.
3. Generating and considering alternative strategies for solving the problem.
4. Designing an action plan for solving the problem.
5. Implementing the action plan.
6. Assessing the action plan and revising the plan if necessary.

Mentor training can involve participants in simulations in which they use the process outlined above to solve induction problems. The simulations and post-analysis of problem-solving exercises will, however, reveal that dealing with difficult problems is a far more complex undertaking than the linear six-step process suggests. The process should be viewed as a starting point for examining problem solving, not as a cure-all for problems encountered by beginning teachers or mentors.

Specialized Training

A few examples of formal structures for assisting beginning teachers are coaching, action research, demonstration teaching, and co-teaching. Assuming that some formal structures are selected by the BTAP development team for the assistance program, mentors

need to be prepared for their involvement in those structures. For instance, if the BTAP calls for mentors to coach beginning teachers, the mentors need to become familiar with the phases of the coaching cycle and learn how to apply the interpersonal and observation skills of the coaching cycle. If the BTAP will involve mentors and beginning teachers in action research, mentors need to be taught about the action research process. Specialized training, then, is tailored to specific structures planned for the BTAP.

Planning and Time Management

Those who volunteer to be mentors accept a significant increase in professional responsibilities. A session on personal planning and time management skills can be a valuable addition to mentor preparation. Toward the end of the preparation program mentors should be provided time to design and share tentative action plans for providing assistance to beginning teachers.

Matching Mentors with Beginning Teachers

In a study by Huffman and Leak (1986), 93 percent of beginning teachers indicated that mentors should teach the same grade or subject matter as the beginning teachers they are matched with. However, these same teachers said they would prefer more competent mentors who did not teach the same grade or subject matter to less competent mentors who did. There are obvious advantages to having a mentor who is located in the same school as the beginner, and additional advantages if the mentor and beginner work in the same area of the school building. Perhaps the two most desirable "matches" between mentor and beginner are those of personality and educational philosophy. The need for personal and philosophical compatibility suggests that mentors and beginning teachers should be provided opportunities for informal interaction before mentoring assignments are made, and that matching preferences of mentors and beginners should be considered.

Support and Rewards for Mentors

Mentors need ongoing organizational, technical, and affective support. A regularly scheduled seminar for mentors is an excellent way to provide such assistance. Mentors can share problems, concerns, and successful strategies at the support seminars. Seminars also provide opportunities for consultation with outside experts or the BTAP coordinator. Finally, training beyond the mentor preparation program can be provided during seminars as such training becomes necessary.

Mentors also need released time. Mentors need time to plan support activities, visit the beginner's classroom, gather resources to share with the beginner, and so on. To merely load mentoring responsibilities onto an already full work schedule is a disservice to the mentor and the beginning teacher, and will almost surely lower the quality of support provided to the beginner.

Rewards for mentors might include extra compensation, stipends for innovative projects or professional travel, or release from nonacademic responsibilities. Perhaps the most important reward the school system can provide is public, formal recognition of the contributions made by mentors.

5
Needs Assessment

When you're a student teacher, if you have a major problem, you have the cooperating teacher right there to deal with it. You don't really have to confront the problem. Then when you're thrown out there to teach on your own and a problem comes up, you're stuck with it. You might have a student come right up to you and say something vulgar. What are you supposed to do? And later, how do you deal with their parents?

—A beginning teacher

The preliminary assessment (see Chapter 3) provides information for a broad, tentative plan for assisting beginning teachers. Once the BTAP is under way, the develop team can assess specific needs of beginners and mentors, make revisions in the BTAP, and individualize assistance.

Informal Discussion

Regular opportunities for informal discussion between the mentor and beginning teacher facilitate ongoing assessment of the beginner's needs. Through active listening, the mentor can help clarify concerns or problems the beginner is experiencing. The mentor will often need to probe the beginner's perceptions in order to clarify the new teacher's needs. For example, a beginner's perception that students are unmotivated to complete seatwork because they are more interested in socializing than working may prove to be only partially correct. In this situation, the mentor could gather additional information by asking

questions such as, "Are all students given the same seatwork or are assignments individualized?" "What specific types of seatwork are given?" "How often is the type of seatwork changed?" and "What do you do while the students are doing seatwork?" Based on answers to questions like these, the mentor and teacher may determine that students are indeed unmotivated to complete seatwork, but that the real problem stems from assignments that are at the wrong level of difficulty and lack variety, or students' need for more individualized assistance. This situation would call for the mentor to help the beginning teacher select appropriate assignments or develop skills to actively monitor and assist students engaged in seatwork.

Another form of informal discussion can take place during group sessions with beginning teachers. Discussions of beginners' problems and concerns at these sessions can help the program coordinator, development team, and principal assess school and district induction needs.

Informal discussion can also reveal mentor needs. The BTAP coordinator, development team, and school principal should meet with mentors on a regular basis. Group meetings often take the form of brainstorming sessions in which mentors contribute ideas for improving both the BTAP and the support they are receiving from the school system.

Interviews

The interview is a formal way to collect needs assessment data. It allows for more systematic collection and analysis of information about beginning teachers' and mentors' needs than informal discussion. Patton (1990, p. 280) distinguishes between the "general interview guide approach" and the "standardized open-ended interview." The general interview guide approach involves a set of topics chosen prior to the interview. The interviewer uses her own words to raise the topics during the interview, and asks those interviewed for their perceptions concerning the topics. The interviewer need not address topics in the order that they appear in the interview guide as long as all of the topics are addressed during the interview. The general interview guide approach allows the interviewer to ask

probing and clarifying questions in addition to questions on predetermined topics. Advantages of the general interview guide approach are its spontaneity and flexibility.

The standardized open-ended interview, in contrast, "consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words" (Patton 1990, p. 280). An advantage of the standardized open-ended interview is that it tends to provide more systematic and comprehensive data.

Regardless of the approach used, the interviewer records responses to questions either by taking written notes or taping the interview. Analysis of one-to-one interviews with beginning teachers or mentors can identify individual needs. Analysis of group interviews or comparison of data from a representative number of one-to-one interviews can identify needs common to a school or district.

Needs assessment interviews of beginning teachers can be designed by the BTAP development team and conducted by team members or mentors. Interviews of mentors can be carried out by the BTAP coordinator, BTAP development team members, principal, or an outside consultant.

Observations

Perhaps the best way for a principal or mentor to determine a beginning teacher's instructional needs is to observe the beginner teaching. One distinction that should be made is the difference between *collecting* and *interpreting* observation data. Data collection should be based on the beginning teacher's concerns and carried out by the mentor in an objective, nonjudgmental manner. Determining a beginner's needs requires that the mentor and beginning teacher interpret the meaning of the observation data and identify differences between what the beginner wants to happen during instruction and what actually is taking place.

Questionnaires

Written questionnaires can also be used as part of needs assessment. Questionnaires can include fixed-response and open-ended items. Data from fixed-response questionnaires are easier to analyze than open-ended responses, but they force the respondent to choose from a limited number of simple, sometimes artificial, responses. Open-ended responses are more difficult to analyze, but allow respondents to provide in-depth answers in their own words. Figure 5.1 is a sample needs assessment questionnaire for beginning teachers. Figure 5.2 is a sample needs assessment questionnaire for mentors. Part A of each questionnaire consists of fixed-response items. Part B of each questionnaire consists of open-ended items.

A Combination of Needs Assessment Techniques

Each of the four needs assessment techniques (informal discussions, interviews, observations, questionnaires) has advantages and disadvantages. It may be preferable to use a combination of all four techniques. Needs assessment questionnaires could be administered to beginning teachers and mentors at the end of the first month of the school year and again at midyear. Small-group interviews of beginning teachers and mentors can also be held after the first month and at midyear, allowing comparison of questionnaire and interview data. Classroom observations of beginning teachers by mentors might take place approximately every two weeks. Informal group discussions with beginning teachers and mentors can be held every few weeks. Informal discussions between individual mentors and beginning teachers can take place on a daily basis provided the mentor and teacher are based in the same school. Using a variety of needs assessment techniques at different intervals allows for comparison of data, which provides a more accurate picture of beginning teacher and mentor needs.

Figure 5.1
Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Beginning Teachers

Part A. Please choose the response for each item that most nearly indicates your level of need for assistance in the area described in the item.

Possible Responses:

A. Little or no need for assistance in this area
B. Some need for assistance in this area
C. Moderate need for assistance in this area
D. High need for assistance in this area
E. Very high need for assistance in this area

1. _____Finding out what is expected of me as a teacher
2. _____Communicating with the principal
3. _____Communicating with other teachers
4. _____Communicating with parents
5. _____Organizing and managing my classroom
6. _____Maintaining student discipline
7. _____Obtaining instructional resources and materials
8. _____Planning for instruction
9. _____Managing my time and work
10. _____Diagnosing student needs
11. _____Evaluating student progress
12. _____Motivating students
13. _____Assisting students with special needs
14. _____Dealing with individual differences among students
15. _____Understanding the curriculum
16. _____Completing administrative paperwork
17. _____Using a variety of teaching methods
18. _____Facilitating group discussions
19. _____Grouping for effective instruction
20. _____Administering standardized achievement tests
21. _____Understanding the school system's teacher evaluation process
22. _____Understanding my legal rights and responsibilities as a teacher
23. _____Dealing with stress
24. _____Dealing with union-related issues
25. _____Becoming aware of special services provided by the school district

Part B. Please respond to the following items.

26. List any professional needs you have that are not addressed by the preceding items:

_____

_____

27. What types of support that are not currently available should the school district provide to you and other beginning teachers?

_____

_____

Figure 5.2
Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Mentors

Part A. Please choose the response for each item that most nearly indicates your level of need for assistance in the area described in the item.

Possible Responses:

A. Little or no need for assistance in this area
B. Some need for assistance in this area
C. Moderate need for assistance in this area
D. High need for assistance in this area
E. Very high need for assistance in this area

1 _____Learning more about what is expected of me as a mentor
2. _____Collecting classroom observation data
3. _____Diagnosing needs of my mentee(s)
4. _____Interpersonal skills
5. _____Assisting my mentee(s) with classroom management
6. _____Helping my mentee(s) develop a variety of effective teaching strategies
7. _____Using principles of adult learning to facilitate the professional growth of my mentee(s)
8. _____Socializing my mentee(s) into the school culture
9. _____Helping my mentee(s) maintain student discipline
10. _____Helping my mentee(s) design a long-range professional development plan
11. _____Finding resources and materials for my mentee(s)
12. _____Providing emotional support for my mentee(s)
13. _____Co-teaching with my mentee(s)
14. _____Managing my time and work
15. _____Problem-solving strategies
16. _____Helping my mentee(s) motivate students
17. _____Helping my mentee(s) assist students with special needs
18. _____Helping my mentee(s) diagnose student needs
19. _____Helping my mentee(s) deal with individual differences among students
20. _____Helping my mentee(s) evaluate student progress
21. _____Engaging in expert coaching of my mentee(s)

Part B. Please respond to the following items:

22. List any needs you have as a mentor that are not addressed by the preceding items:

_____

_____

23. What types of support that are not currently available should the school district provide to you and other mentors?

_____

_____

6
Forms of Initial Assistance

They just gave us our books and said, "Here you go."

—A beginning teacher who
was not provided an orientation

They went through the manual with us, instead of just throwing it at us and saying, "Here you are." It really helped.

—A beginning teacher who
was provided an orientation

The initial assistance provided beginners is an important part of the foundation upon which their careers will be set. There are three items that are not part of a BTAP but must be addressed before beginning teachers arrive if they are to have any real chance for success. These items are teaching assignment, workload, and work environment. New teachers must be assigned to students and content areas compatible with their preparation, experience, and abilities. Reasonable schedules, class sizes, and co-curricular responsibilities are all factors in an appropriate workload. And the beginner deserves a work environment with adequate space, furniture, equipment, and materials. The most well-intentioned and carefully planned BTAP may not be able to overcome inappropriate teaching assignments, workloads, and work environments. If these items are taken care of, an effective BTAP can help ensure success for newcomers from the beginning.

Celebrating the Beginner's Arrival

The hiring of a new teacher should be tied to celebration and demonstration that the professional community welcomes the beginner. Hirsh (1990) recommends that the teacher be invited to a contract-signing ceremony with district VIPs present and that a commemorative photograph be taken. Other expressions of support include luncheons, dinners, and receptions in honor of new teachers with the superintendent, principals, and mentors. The purpose of holding ceremonies or socials is to express to the new teacher that the beginner's entrance into the profession is considered a significant and welcome event by the school district and the beginner's new colleagues.

Establishing Rapport and Building Trust

The principal, mentor, and other support persons must establish rapport and build trust with the beginner at the earliest opportunity. Rapport can be established through open communication, clarifying and dignifying the beginner's concerns, and accepting the new teacher as a colleague. The beginner's trust can be earned by displaying competence and professionalism as a support person, maintaining confidentiality, keeping commitments, and helping the beginner experience success during the initial days of teaching.

Orientation

Beginning teachers can benefit from attendance at a general orientation for all teachers at the start of the new year but they should also receive a special orientation that provides information pertinent to them that may not be dealt with at "kick-off" inservice days for all teachers. A special orientation for beginning teachers can provide information on several topics.

The Community

New teachers from outside the community need to become aware of prevailing community norms, customs, and values. They should acquire an understanding of socioeconomic conditions in the community. They should also be made aware of community resources for teachers and students as well as special community needs that the school is expected to help meet.

Many school districts offer community tours to beginning teachers. Others arrange a community orientation and social hosted by the PTA, school board, or chamber of commerce. A community resource file can be made available, including a map of the community and information on housing, public utilities, transportation, shopping, medical facilities, social organizations, churches, and so on.

School District Policies and Procedures

Merely providing beginning teachers with handbooks is insufficient. Teachers need to have policies and procedures explained to them, with rationales and examples. Beginning teachers need to be made aware of such things as:

- attendance policies
- salaries and benefits
- the teacher evaluation process
- teachers' legal rights and responsibilities
- the role of the local educational association
- administrative record-keeping responsibilities

The Curriculum

The orientation can include an introduction to the philosophy, purpose, aims, and goals of the school curriculum. An overview of the curriculum's scope and sequence should be provided with supervisors or experienced teachers leading small-group sessions on the specific content that beginners will be teaching. The new teachers should be shown how to use the curriculum guide and "walked through" at least one unit of instruction from the guide. Finally, beginners need to learn about available curricular resources and how to request new resources.

Information About the BTAP

The BTAP's goals, mentors, and support activities should be discussed during orientation. A written program description can be included with orientation materials. Without a proper introduction to the BTAP, beginning teachers may misconstrue the program. The BTAP might be considered just another set of hurdles to be overcome, and the mentor just one more supervisor to be dealt with. Emphasizing the primary purpose of the BTAP—to provide support to the beginning teacher—and giving specific examples of the types of assistance available can help to dispel misconceptions the beginner may have concerning the program.

The School

The principal and school-based support persons may wish to design their own orientation in addition to the district orientation. A tour of the school building is recommended. A map of the school with key locations can be valuable to the beginner during the first days of the school year. Beyond learning about the building, beginners need to acquire a variety of information about the school, including information about:

- locating, checking out, and operating instructional media
- finding various administrative forms (and who to give the forms to once they are completed)
- school policies on student discipline
- school guidelines on homework
- fire drill procedures
- carrying out student supervision responsibilities
- responding to student illness or injury during the instructional day
- taking lunch count and attendance
- securing parental permission for special activities or field trips
- the school's student population

The Beginner's Specific Responsibilities

The department chairperson or team leader and mentor should be available to discuss the beginner's specific responsibilities. Beginners need to be given their class schedules, rosters, and information about students' past experiences and needs. Any co-curricular assignments can be explained during this phase of the orientation. Each beginner's classroom(s) can be visited, and classroom resources such as texts, workbooks, learning kits, and equipment can be previewed.

Informal Interaction

Not all of the beginner's orientation should be technical in nature. "Get acquainted" and recreational activities can be planned as part of the orientation. Informal interaction with experienced teachers and other beginning teachers should be encouraged during meals, coffee breaks, or a post-session reception. Enjoyable group activities and informal discussions can go a long way toward making the beginner feel comfortable with new colleagues and reducing the natural apprehension that is part of being the "new kid on the block."

Assistance for the First Week of Teaching

The first week of teaching is the most critical one for beginning teachers. The best way to help new teachers have a successful first week is to help them *prepare* for that week well in advance. Mentors can help new teachers create seating arrangements that promote effective classroom management and instruction. Classroom equipment and materials can be arranged for maximum utility. Rules and procedures for student behavior can be created.

Teachers should present classroom rules and procedures on the first day of school. Rationales for each rule or procedure should be provided and examples of compliance and noncompliance given. Rewards for compliance and consequences for noncompliance should be explained (Brooks and Shouse 1984). During the

remainder of the first week students should be given opportunities to rehearse classroom procedures and receive feedback on their performance with reteaching provided when necessary (Evertson, Wide, Green, and Crawford 1985). By creating a productive classroom climate during the first days of teaching, beginning teachers lay the foundation for a positive atmosphere for the entire school year. Beginners will be far more likely to establish this type of atmosphere with the assistance of mentors who have experience creating and teaching appropriate rules and procedures.

Mentors can also help beginners prepare for teaching academic content during the first week by collaborating in the design of detailed lesson plans. New teachers can rehearse or describe critical elements of lessons to mentors. Mentors and beginners can discuss situations that might occur during lessons and alternative teacher responses. Each mentor and new teacher can meet daily once the first week of school is under way to analyze the beginner's teaching for the day and revise plans for the following day. The first week is the most important time of the school year for the mentor to be "on-call" for the beginning teacher, ready to provide professional and emotional support.

7
Forms of Ongoing Assistance

Stress! You're teaching classes all day long. You're keeping students on task, you're testing, you're trying to follow all the rules: every principle and guideline that's set out for you. You're adhering to a schedule—you must teach all the things in the course of study by the end of the year. After school you go home and take your job with you. Then you must face kids who have homework and a husband who has had a tough day too.

—A beginning teacher

Let them know that you've been there, that you've experienced this too, and that they can survive!

—A beginning teacher mentor

The big thing is to be there, with an open ear, a shoulder to cry on, whatever they need.

—A beginning teacher mentor

Beginning teachers need support throughout the induction period. BTAP development teams must choose from, adapt, and integrate a wide range of strategies to provide this support. Forms of assistance to be included in a particular BTAP depend on program goals, induction team expertise, available resources, and specific beginner's needs.

Providing Moral Support

Moral support is one of the most vital forms of assistance the induction team can provide for the beginning teacher. This does not require sophisticated counseling skills. Just being available to listen to the new teacher's concerns and help the beginner keep matters in perspective can be of enormous benefit to the newcomer. Moral support can be provided during informal discussions between an induction team member and the beginner, during induction team meetings, and during seminars that include other beginning teachers.

Providing System Information

The beginning teacher needs to acquire an enormous amount of system information throughout the school year. After the initial orientation, the principal and mentor become the logical conveyers of most system information. They can extend and reinforce information initially provided during the orientation, and introduce new information as the school year continues. Each month brings new information needs. The Pennsylvania State Education Association has designed a calendar of topics for a BTAP, listing information and other needs and suggesting which month each need should be addressed. A modified version of the calendar is provided in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1
Examples of BTAP Topics

MONTH	TOPIC
August:	Emergency phone numbers Schedule Getting Started Role and Responsibility of the Beginning Teacher as a Part of the Induction Program Expectations for Beginning Teachers
Sept-May:	Importance of Teacher Self-Image
September:	Role and Responsibilities of the Induction Team District Policies and Procedures District Philosophy

	Grading and Retention Policy
	Building Policies and Procedures
	Extra Duties
Sept-Nov:	Curriculum Guides and Planned Course Documents
	Informal Peer Interaction Guidelines
	Classroom Management
	Time Management
October:	Contractual Obligations
	Professional Obligations
	Inservice Education
	Professional Organizations
	Certification and Induction
	Discipline Policy
	Attendance Procedures
	Home-School Communication
	Parent-Teacher Conference Procedures
	Parent-Teacher Conferencing Techniques
	Characteristics of Professionalism
	Confidentiality
	Support of School System
	Support of Colleagues
	Ethics
	Academic Freedom
	Professional Demeanor
	Record Keeping
November:	Textbooks, Resource Materials, Community Resources
	Library Services
	Pupil Support Services
	Guidance
	Nurse
	Home, School Visitor
	School Psychologist
December:	Field Trip Procedures
	Extracurricular Activities
January:	Federal Programs, including Chapter I and II
	Organization for Instruction
	Student Needs
	Student Involvement and Motivation
February:	Group Instruction
March:	Slow Learners
	Special Education Referrals
	Gifted and Talented Students
	Parental Contacts and Involvement
April:	Goal Setting
	Demographic and Social Structure of the Community
May:	Materials Acquisition

This partial reproduction is from Steinhart (ed.) (1986). *Induction Manual*. Pennsylvania State Education Association, Council on Instruction and Professional Development, 6-9.

One technique for delivering information to the beginner is the *induction notebook*. The notebook can be divided into sections, with a different section containing information and materials for each month. A monthly newsletter for beginning teachers can provide timely information. A beginning teacher bulletin board can also be used to remind beginners and mentors of upcoming events and responsibilities.

Socializing the Beginning Teacher

Beginners need to find out what is expected of them as professionals and faculty members, and how to meet those expectations. Serving as positive role models is one of the most powerful ways other professionals can help socialize the beginning teacher. Additionally, the mentor can make the beginner aware of do's and don'ts that have become part of the school culture over the years. The beginner also needs to be taught how to "buck the system" when necessary—how to advocate needed change without provoking negative responses from others.

Socialization is a two-way street. Professionals and nonprofessionals in the school need to do everything possible to break down the social isolation often experienced by new teachers. Early in the year, the principal can arrange roundtable discussions about school norms and routines involving beginners, mentors, and other experienced teachers. Beginners will be fully socialized only through extended interaction with other members of the school community.

Assisting with Planning, Organizing, and Work Management

Up-front planning and organizing for the school year will make the beginner's first teaching experiences as productive and enjoyable as possible. Mentors can help beginners design topical outlines for the school year for each content area they are responsible for teaching. The beginner and mentor can collaborate in writing the first units of instruction and daily plans, and the mentor can

review the new teacher's lesson plans for the remainder of the first term.

Assistance with classroom organization should be provided throughout the school year. The mentor can help the beginner rearrange classroom furniture and space, create new learning and resource centers, design systems for tracking student progress, and set up new classroom routines to accommodate changing curriculum and instruction.

One of beginning teachers' chief complaints is the tremendous workload they have, including a seemingly endless flow of paperwork. Induction team members can share with the beginners "tricks of the trade" for reducing the time needed to create learning materials, plan lessons, grade student work, and complete administrative paperwork. Also, mentors can help beginners track the amount of time they are spending on various out-of-class tasks so beginners can prioritize their schedules to devote more time to essential work and less time to nonessential activities.

Helping Beginners Find Resources and Materials

The induction team should make sure at the beginning of the school year that the beginner has all the resources and materials generally required for implementing the curriculum. The mentor can help the new teacher procure necessary resources and materials for each new unit of instruction. It may be necessary for the BTAP to provide special funding to ensure that beginners have adequate resources for effective teaching.

Holding Team Meetings

The induction team should meet on a regular basis to review the new teacher's progress and discuss the beginner's needs. Regular meetings allow team members to review prior support activities and coordinate future team efforts. These meetings can also be used to design a professional development plan for the beginning teacher. The plan should not be formulated until the beginner has had several weeks of teaching experience. The beginner,

with the assistance of other members of the induction team, should set long-range professional improvement goals and objectives. The team must agree on activities that each member will carry out to help meet the goals and set a standard of achievement. Figure 7.2 is a form for organizing a professional development plan. As the team continues to meet throughout the school year, progress toward the professional development goals can be discussed and, if necessary, revisions can be made in the action plans.

Figure 7.2
Beginning Teacher Professional Development Plan

Beginning Teacher _____
Mentor _____
Principal _____
Outside Consultant _____
Date _____

Professional Improvement Goal _____
_____

Objectives _____
_____

Action Plan

Beginning Teacher's Responsibilities _____
_____

Mentor's Responsibilities _____
_____

Principal's Responsibilities _____
_____

Outside Consultant's Responsibilities _____
_____

Standard of Achievement _____
_____

Providing Skills Training

Topics for training programs include classroom management skills, instructional skills, and skills for collaborating with parents. Joyce and Showers (1982) have developed a research-based model for skills training, which includes the following phases:

1. Presentation of the theory or rationale underlying the skill
2. Demonstration of the skill
3. Skill practice in protected conditions, accompanied by feedback
4. Coaching within the clinical setting

School districts with insufficient numbers of beginners for skills training workshops may wish to join a BTAP consortium, which can provide training for beginners from several school districts at the same workshops. An interesting variation of a beginner training program is a series of workshops attended by new teachers and mentors, with beginners and mentors in the role of trainee.

Coaching the Beginner

The beginning teacher can be coached by either the principal or mentor, although the mentor is more likely to coach the beginner on a regular basis. The following is a five-phase coaching model based on the clinical supervision model developed by Goldhammer (1969).

Pre-Observation Conference

The coach and beginner start the pre-observation conference by discussing the learning objectives, planned activities, and student evaluation strategies for an upcoming lesson the beginner will be teaching. Next the coach and beginner discuss concerns or interests the new teacher may have about the lesson. The parties agree on specific teacher and student behaviors the coach will gather data on during the lesson and select or design a data-collection system.

Classroom Observation

The coach observes the beginner's lesson using the observation system selected or designed in the pre-observation conference. Because the pre-observation conference agreement represents a contract between the coach and beginner, the coach collects only the agreed-upon data.

Analysis and Strategy

The coach analyzes the observation data and decides how to best report the information to the beginner. The coach also decides what interpersonal approach to use during the post-observation conference.

Post-Observation Conference

The coach shares the data collected during the classroom observation, and the coach and beginner interpret the data. The beginner may then choose an instructional improvement goal. At this point the post-observation conference can shift into a new pre-observation conference as the beginner and mentor plan changes in the beginner's teaching and structure a new observation to collect data on the improvement effort.

Post-Analysis

The post-analysis consists of the coach collecting and analyzing data about his own coaching performance for the purpose of future improvement. Post-analysis includes oral feedback from the beginner, or the coach may tape the post-observation conference and review the tape.

Arranging Observations by Beginning Teachers

One of the most helpful benefits provided to a beginning teacher is the opportunity to observe effective teaching. The principal and mentor can arrange for the beginning teacher to visit effective teachers' classrooms. It's a good idea for the beginner to collect information on particular aspects of observed lessons. Some examples of

things the new teacher might focus on are classroom organization, how the teacher opens the lesson, how directions are given, teacher questioning, student learning activities, and lesson closure. It is helpful to arrange visitations that allow the beginner to observe different content areas, grade levels, and a variety of teaching styles.

Demonstration teaching allows the beginner to observe a master teacher using a particular instructional strategy. The master teacher can be the mentor or another teacher. The demonstration can take one of two forms—the new teacher can visit the master teacher's classroom or the master teacher can visit the beginner's room and teach a lesson to the students. The demonstration need not be limited to the delivery of instruction. The master teacher can also model what is done to prepare for and evaluate the observed lesson.

Co-Teaching

The beginning teacher and mentor are natural partners for co-teaching. An advantage of co-teaching for the new teacher is that the beginner not only observes a skilled teacher in action but is actively involved with the experienced colleague throughout the entire process of diagnosing student needs, setting learning objectives, planning the lesson, and evaluating results. The beginner and mentor can co-teach a single lesson or an entire unit of instruction.

Videotaping

Videotape is a powerful tool for improving the beginner's classroom management and instruction. A demonstration lesson can be taped so that the beginning teacher and mentor can review and analyze key elements of the lesson. Videotaping can also be used to collect classroom observation data on the beginner's instruction during a coaching cycle. The new teacher and principal or mentor can review videos of the beginner's teaching, freezing the tape to discuss instructional strengths and problems revealed by the video. One especially effective

technique is to tape the beginner's instruction before and after implementation of an action plan for instructional improvement. The "before" and "after" videos can be used to observe the beginner's progress toward the improvement goal.

Fostering Reflection

One way to promote beginning teachers' personal and professional development is to provide opportunities for beginners to reflect on experiences, problems, successes, and future alternatives. There are several ways to promote reflection.

Journal Writing

Journal writing is an ongoing means of reflection. Critical events, emotions, concerns, and future plans can all be subjects for reflective writing, which can be done daily. The beginning teacher and mentor need to establish at the beginning of the school year whether the new teacher's journal entries will be private or shared with the mentor.

Nonevaluative Portfolios

A nonevaluative portfolio is a collection of items that form a record of the beginner's personal and professional growth. Student papers, photographs, especially effective lesson plans, and even videotapes may be included in the portfolio. Items in the portfolio reflect incidents, milestones, and successes experienced by the beginner. Reviewing the portfolio gives the new teacher an opportunity to reflect on past events and become more aware of how concerns, attitudes, values, and behaviors develop and change throughout the school year.

Student Case Studies

All teachers have some students that are more difficult to teach than others. One way that the beginner can turn frustration into objective inquiry aimed at student growth is to carry out an intensive case study of an at-risk student. A case study involves gathering considerable information

from a variety of sources on the student's behaviors and the reasons for those behaviors. The study should culminate in a reflective report, including a description of actions the beginner intends to carry out to foster the student's future personal, social, and academic growth.

Review of Critical Incidents

Another way to encourage beginners to reflect is to have them analyze critical events that occur at school. Beginners can describe events that have significantly affected them and consider the context of the event and why it had such a significant effect. Beginners can interpret current feelings and concerns about the event and, finally, reflect on what they have learned from the event and ways to respond to similar situations in the future.

Collaborating on Action Research

Action research is a scientific approach to finding practical solutions to problems occurring in the school setting. It can be carried out by individuals or teams. Action research occurs within a BTAP when a mentor and new teacher collaborate to solve a problem in the beginner's classroom. The mentor and beginner engaged in action research should carry out the following steps:

1. Define a problem being experienced by the beginner.
2. Gather and analyze all relevant data using original sources (students, teacher and school records, classroom observations, etc.) and secondary sources (theoretical journal articles, research studies, etc.).
3. Form a hypothesis—a possible solution to the problem.
4. Test the hypothesis by designing and carrying out a simple and practical research study in the beginner's classroom.
5. Analyze the data collected during the study to determine whether or not the hypothesis is correct. If the hypothesis is shown to be incorrect, a new hypothesis can be formed, and a new study designed.

This cycle can be repeated until a correct hypothesis is found.

Helping the Beginner Evaluate Students

One key to helping the beginning teacher evaluate student progress is to collaboratively create learning objectives that are relevant, at the correct level of difficulty, and written in measurable terms. Another important skill involves the use of varied, valid, and reliable methods for measuring student progress. Initially, induction team members and the beginner can design measurable objectives and corresponding evaluation methods. The induction team can also help the beginner interpret information on student progress. After the first academic term, support persons can continue to review the new teacher's evaluation methods and grading procedures. Support persons can recommend methods of measuring student progress and guidelines for assigning grades but, as a professional, the beginning teacher must assume final responsibility for student evaluation.

Preparing the Beginner for Interaction with Parents

The induction team can help the beginning teacher prepare for back-to-school night, parent-teacher conference days, and conferences requested by the beginner or parents to discuss special problems. If a problem is serious or if the situation is emotionally charged, one strategy is for the mentor and beginning teacher to role-play a conference prior to the meeting with parents. This allows the beginner to practice dealing with issues that might come up during the conference, and allows the mentor to provide corrective feedback on the beginner's interpersonal style.

Preparing the Beginner for Summative Evaluation

I have suggested that mentors should not participate in summative evaluation of beginning teachers. This does not mean that mentors shouldn't help the beginner understand the district's summative evaluation system. The mentor can review the school system's evaluation instruments with the beginner, and even carry out

"practice" observations to familiarize the beginner with what will take place in actual summative evaluation observations.

Conducting Seminars

The beginning teacher seminar can incorporate many forms of assistance. The seminar can be a structure for sharing information, discussing concerns, or planning for the future. It can be conducted by a mentor or mentor team, principal, the BTAP coordinator, or a representative of higher education. Seminars can be held weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Despite the wide variety of topics that can be addressed at seminars, perhaps their greatest advantage is the opportunity they provide for beginning teachers to engage in professional dialogue, sharing their experiences and providing emotional support for one another.

8
Summative Program Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to improve, not to prove.

—Daniel Stufflebeam

Be ready to listen to suggestions. Be open to change.

—An experienced mentor advising novice mentors

A comprehensive plan for assisting beginning teachers is the beginning rather than the end of successful BTAP development. Effective program development can be viewed as a continuous cycle involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and renewed planning for program improvement. The BTAP development model includes both formative and summative evaluation. Both can be part of a continuous program development cycle.

Changes made in the program as a result of formative evaluation usually involve selected elements of the program rather than major revisions. Eventually, a summative evaluation will be necessary to assess the overall value of the program and to make any necessary major changes. Formative and summative evaluation should not be viewed as entirely discreet. Much of the data collected for formative evaluation can be reanalyzed as part of a summative evaluation conducted later.

Purposes of Summative Program Evaluation

There are several reasons for summative program evaluation. One is to judge the overall value of the BTAP and to determine whether or not it should continue. Another is to determine minor or major revisions that should be made in the program. A third is to provide information about the BTAP to interested stakeholders. A fourth is to satisfy state requirements calling for evaluations of mandated BTAPs. The purposes of the evaluation will in large part determine the scope and breadth of the evaluation.

Who Should Conduct the BTAP Evaluation?

The BTAP development team is the logical choice to coordinate the program evaluation. Team members may require technical assistance from the district office, state agencies, or university experts, but will probably be able to design a great deal of the evaluation themselves. Beginning teachers, mentors, and principals participating in the BTAP can take on major roles in data collection and analysis. For instance, program participants can be asked to design questions for surveys or interviews, recommend documents or observations that could yield valuable data, and suggest alternative interpretations of collected data.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation design depends largely on the questions that those authorizing the evaluation want answered. Some possible evaluation questions are:

1. What effect has the BTAP context (school environment, professional relationships within the school, school-community relations, administrative support for staff development) had on the program?
2. Have the needs of beginning teachers and mentors been correctly assessed?
3. Is the BTAP design adequate for meeting identified needs?
4. Have adequate human and material resources been provided for the BTAP?

5. Have participants in the BTAP (including beginning teachers, mentors, and principals) been adequately prepared for their roles in the assistance program?

6. Has each component of the BTAP been implemented as planned? If not, how has BTAP implementation varied from the formal plan?

7. Have the intended outcomes of the BTAP been accomplished?

8. What positive or negative unintended outcomes have resulted from the BTAP?

Data Sources and Data-Gathering Methods

A data *source* is a person, place, or thing from which data relevant to the evaluation can be gathered. Beginning teachers, their students, mentors, principals, other induction team members, other teachers, and school and classroom documents are all potential sources of BTAP evaluation data. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, case studies, pre-post measures, and document review are *methods* of gathering data from selected sources. A combination of various sources and data-gathering methods usually yields richer information than any single source or method.

Measuring Outcomes

The last two of the potential evaluation questions listed above focus on program outcomes. Intended outcomes are the program goals and objectives. Unintended outcomes are any additional positive or negative changes that result from the BTAP. Categories of intended or unintended outcomes that might be measured during a BTAP evaluation include:

Personal Changes in:
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Values
- Concerns
- Daily performance

Organizational Changes in:
- Norms
- Customs
- Values
- Communication
- Leadership
- Cooperation

The individual change categories can apply to beginning teachers, students, mentors, principals, and other program participants. Program evaluators may also wish to measure BTAP's effects on the school as an organization. A program focused on a specific population may have building-wide effects that are worth investigating.

What To Do With Evaluation Results

A variety of audiences are interested in BTAP evaluation reports, including state departments of education, the school board, BTAP participants, educational associations, and other school districts. Different types of reports may be required for different audiences, with reports varying in length, the types of information provided, and language (technical or nontechnical). Evaluation results may indicate that the BTAP is largely successful and that only minor changes in the program are required. Should the evaluation results indicate serious problems with the BTAP, the program development team will need to begin planning for major program revisions.

* * *

Education today is facing a variety of complicated problems, many of which seem to have no clear solution. How to effectively assist beginning teachers is itself a complex problem. Fortunately, Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs provide a viable solution. Those of us who have seen the power of well-designed BTAPs have a two-fold mission: First, to make educators and other stakeholders aware of the serious need for assistance programs for beginning teachers, and second, to convince them to commit the human and material resources necessary to make effective BTAPs a reality.

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